

Note from the Editor

Apart from four book reviews this issue of EASTM contains the revised papers of a workshop that took place in Princeton in 2002 under the title “Global Science and Comparative History: Jesuits, Science and Philology in China and Europe, 1550-1850”. The workshop was organized by Benjamin Elman, Professor of East Asian Studies and History at Princeton University, who also contributed an introduction to the four essays written by Alix Cooper, Denise Phillips, Bruce Rusk, and Laura Hostetler. As will be described by Benjamin Elman, these fascinating papers deal with comparative case studies in language, philology and cartography, not only taking into account their respective intellectual, cultural and scientific environments in Europe and China, but also by investigating encounters between them. The common aim of the workshop and thus the papers is to address interactions and discourses between the local and global (especially in the form of bilingualism, in the interpretation of writing systems, as well as in ethnographic traditions and cartographic practices), the relevance of classical learning and its close relationship with scientific activities, investigations of the natural world, and currents of natural philosophy, both in late imperial China and early modern Europe. Moreover, a strong claim is made for the adoption of rigorous methods in comparative research by using appropriate concepts and categories and by paying due and differential attention to historical contexts, thus avoiding misleading and false teleologies in the history of science and technology.

By way of a preview, issue 27 (2007) will contain a collection of articles brought together by Catherine Jami, Senior Researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris), during the 11th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, held by our society in Munich, Germany, from August 15-20, 2005. Hsu Kuang-tai's contribution deals with the interpretation of the Four Elements as *ti* 體 (forms) and of the Five Phases as *yong* 用 (functions) and outlines the historical development of this type of interpretation from Shao Yong's 邵雍 (1011-1077) *Huangji jingshi* 皇極經世 (Supreme Principles Governing the World) to Matteo Ricci's (1552-1610) *Qiankun tiyi* 乾坤體義 (Structure and Meanings of the Heaven and Earth). He shows how Ricci's introduction of the Four Elements borrowed from a tradition that can be traced back to the eleventh century. Catherine Jami elucidates the relationship between Western learning and imperial scholarship as represented by the Kangxi emperor's (r. 1662-1722) study. She makes clear that Kangxi's emphasis on Western learning has to be interpreted as a part of his patronage of scholarship in general. Lü Lingfeng discusses the prediction of eclipses and the eventual victory of European astronomy in Qing China (1644-1911). By analysing the predictions made at the Astronomical Bureau, he points out that—at least before 1731—they were not always as accurate as has been usually claimed. This raises interesting historiographical issues which are discussed by him. Shi Yunli takes an intensive look at the *Tianbu zhenyuan* 天步真元 (True Principles of the Heavenly Pacing), which was compiled by the Polish Jesuit missionary Nikolaus

Smogulecki (1611-1656) and his Chinese disciple Xue Fengzuo 薛鳳祚 (1600-1680). Contrary to widespread belief, heliocentrism is not explicitly propounded in this treatise. Yet it proposed an alternative to Western astronomy as practiced by the Beijing Jesuits. The publication of the *Tianbu zhenyuan* in 1664 suggests that it might have been a response from the Ming loyalist milieu to the Calendar Case.

As always, it is a pleasure for me to express my sincere gratitude to the authors and anonymous referees for their contributions and critical evaluations as well as to my collaborators in Cambridge and Tübingen for their constant support in producing another interesting issue of EASTM.

Hans Ulrich Vogel
Seminar für Sinologie und Koreanistik
Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

NEW WEBSITE FOR ISHEASTM!

We are happy to announce that our society has a new website much superior to the old one! To see it, please go to:

www.nri.org.uk/ISHEASTM.html

(We may be switching servers in the near future, so you could well be redirected when you follow this link.)